

Ad Hoc Bedford Museum Study Committee

Minutes of August 5, 2014

Attending: members Gaye Carpenter, Linda Christen, Angelo Colao, Selectmen William Moonan and Mike Rosenberg; Francis Gicca, Bedford Historical Society representative; and Carol Amick of the Historical Society. Absent: members Christopher Weisz and Kara Kerwin. The committee elected Mr. Moonan as chair and Mr. Rosenberg as clerk.

Mr. Gicca said the artifacts and documents that the Historical Society is preserving for the town are fundamentally locked away, and there is no space for new donations. A society committee has conducted an inventory of what can be displayed, and has interacted with contiguous and nearby historical groups and museums. "Ultimately we have to see our options before we know what we can do," he said. The society will run the museum in Bedford and make it work. The vision is an active museum with permanent exhibits, rotating displays, programs and interactive opportunities.

Mr. Moonan told the members that when initially considering local museum options, it is premature to be limited by questions about finance or current uses. Municipal and private facilities as well as buildings donated by families can be considered. Mr. Gicca noted that one town in the region has displays in several locations. Mr. Colao said the Town Hall corridors are wide enough for displays. Mr. Moonan said new construction or additions are possibilities. Mr. Gicca pointed out that fire protection is an important consideration, especially with wooden buildings. Mr. Moonan said he expects members will make site visits to facilities in other cities and towns. Mr. Colao mentioned that advantage of locating a museum near the Council on Aging, a source of volunteers.. Ms. Amick noted that there is a good model in Arlington.

It was noted that accessibility issues will be among the considerations. Mr. Gicca said the Historical Committee ideally would like to work with 3,500-4,000 square feet, which would accommodate rotating displays. (He said the original space requirement was close to 30,000 square feet.) Ms. Christen said the search should not overlook the Route 3/Middlesex Turnpike commercial corridor, especially when considering the town's connection to the development of Route 128.

Mr. Gicca asked if any municipal space is currently available. Mr. Rosenberg said he feels the Town Hall multi-purpose room is under-used. Mr. Gicca also asked about the library basement. Mr. Moonan said the museum could benefit local business, and Mr. Gicca noted the historical role of business in Bedford.

Mr. Gicca said the Historical Society's research determined that single-purpose museums are not visited often. Mr. Moonan said the committee needs to assemble a check list of issues. Mr. Colao said he already has started drafting such a list. Mr. Gicca said ideally Museum space could be used for other functions. Ms. Christen said there could be a need for room to grow. Ms. Amick added that once a museum is established, the Historical Society should expect an influx of donations.

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, August 11. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.